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ABSTRACT

This study addressed two research questions: (1) To what extent do teacher educators inquire and carry out research in the field of teacher education? and (2) To what extent do teacher educators identify with the field of teacher education? Responses to a survey questionnaire were received from 95 teacher educators who regularly teach methods courses. They represented a national sample of large and small institutions, Research and Development (R&D) oriented institutions, and institutions not oriented toward R&D. A total of 32 institutions were represented. In the main, the findings suggest that a small proportion of teacher educators are involved in teacher education research, and that one reason that may account for this fact is that as academics, they identify more closely with other disciplines within the broad field of education. In discussing these findings, it is suggested that deans of education might employ professors in their teacher education programs who have been trained in teacher education, and that teacher education researchers are in need of a professional association with which they can identify. (JD)

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SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

One of the vicious aspects of negative stereotypes is that the targets of such pejorative attributions begin to believe them. It has long been "known" that teacher educators are not the scholars that they ought to be nor do they measure up in terms of research productivity with their liberal arts colleagues in university settings. The Clark and Guba(1977) studies are often cited to support this generalization. Clark, in citing this comprehensive survey, wrote that "The median level of institutional productivity as assessed by the measures in the RITE study was zero." (Clark, 1979, p.2). And yet subsequent work in this area found contradictory results. Ducharme and Agne(1982) reported that their study of the professoriate in Education "reveals dramatically that SCDE faculty are at least as productive in scholarly matters as their colleagues in other units in terms of frequency and duration of publishing" in referred journals. Carter (1984) found that almost

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three-fourths of the faculty group she surveyed were heavily engaged in productive research. And Schwebel's (1982) review of surveys of research productivity of professors in higher education led him to conclude that "proportionately, education faculty are more productive and presumably use more of their research/writing hours in the preparation of books" than their colleagues.(p. 226).

However, none of these surveys or researches differentiated between faculty members in SCDE's generally and teacher educators specifically. And, there was not much attention in these efforts directed to determining what sorts of research were being carried out by professors of education. Data collected in carrying out a study of professors of methods courses (Raths and Ruchkin, 1984) provide some information in these areas.

The initial question is how much research is being done in the particular field of teacher education by teacher educators? My view may be a reflection of "believing the stereotype", but it is based on some relevant personal experiences. I have on occasion looked for research that might illuminate my professional responsibilities in the field of teacher education, and the ERIC searches I

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generated in these efforts led to sparse results. I have also served as an editor of a general research journal and refereed articles submitted to a teacher education research column in the Journal of Teacher Education, and it is safe to say that the submission rates to these outlets for teacher education research were, to say the least, limited. This analysis attempts to document the extent to which teacher educators are involved in teacher education research.

If it is the case that teacher educators are not producing much research in teacher education, what are some factors that may account for this short-coming. It is suggested here that many people working as teacher educators do not identify with the field. That is, people who are assigned teacher education roles actually see themselves as scholars in other disciplines, and thus they are not disposed to inquire into their day-to-day work as teacher educators. In fact, teaching assignments in teacher education may actually hinder their work. It is assumed that a professor teaching in the field of American history does research in American history. His teaching and his research interests are more congruent. This congruence is probably greater when the professor is teaching an advanced

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seminar. The same would be true for the scholar in physics, or English literature. In teacher education, a professor vitally interested primarily in studying advanced topics in reading research may find a teaching assignment in the area of "general methods of secondary education" to be a hindrance and a distraction to his research. One measure of allegiance to teacher education as a field of inquiry is the professional associations to which faculty members belong. This research attempted to document the extent to which teacher educators identify with the field of teacher education.

In sum, this study addresses two research questions:

1. To what extent do teacher educators inquire and carry out research in the field of teacher education?

2. To what extent do teacher educators identify with the field of techer education?

SAMPLING DESIGN

The data reported here were taken from a survey reported previously. (Raths and Ruchkin, 1984). It is instructive to rehearse briefly the sampling design of this earlier study. A purposive sampling design was utilized to

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advance its principal goal, to survey professors of methods courses offered in teacher education institutions having an R&D orientation with those found in institutions which do not have an R&D orientation. Taking a probability sample of all teacher education institutions was not contemplated since there was a need to over-sample, from a proportional point of view, those institutions that were seen as having an R&D orientation. Two samples were drawn to make this comparison.

1. Those institutions which were a part of the Dean's Network, a group of colleges of education which characterized themselves as having an R&D orientation, made up the first sample. The purposes of the Dean's Network organization were never quite clear but almost implicitly the group was organized to advance the goals of R&D institutions in education. Some members saw the aim of the group to be one of lobbying Congress, giving emphasis to the unique orientation of its members. Indeed a number of Network activities were held in Washington with breakfasts given for members of Congress in the Rayburn Building. Others envisioned a different role for the Dean's Network; some thought it might become a replacement for NCATE; others as a source of collegial consulting over mutual problems,

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e.g., How can we handle the special education mandates in teacher education? What resources can we share dealing with multicultural education? The group originally included the colleges of education of the two football conferences, the Big 10 and the Big 8, with the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee also serving as regular members. In 1980, the Network increased to thirty-eight members. The expansion resulted from extending invitations to approximately twenty other institutions which were seen as having R&D orientations. The thirty-eight members of the expanded Dean's Network made up the sample of this reference group; however four members of the Dean's Network did not have undergraduate teacher education programs and two which did were not members of AACTE. Since we planned to use AACTE rosters to secure "matches" from non-R&D institutions to carry out the compare-and-contrast design, we eliminated six institutions from the list of thirty-eight members in the Dean's Network, and sent questionnaires to only thirty two.

2. The second sample was linked to the first. We wanted to compare institutions with an R&D orientation with those that had different orientations. We thought that "size of institution" would have some impact on our research. (As it turned out later, size was an irrelevant

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variable.) Given our premise, we "matched" an institution on the AACTE membership list which was not a member of the Dean's Network with an institution that was part of the Network. We selected as a match, in each case, the institution on the AACTE roster with an UG teacher education student body size, (estimated by the number of teacher education graduates in 1980), closest in number to that of the Network institution. We also paired institutions on the basis of whether they were private or public. For instance, a private university in the Dean's Network was matched with a private institution on the AACTE roster with a similar sized teacher education student body. We mailed questionnaires to thirty two institutions identified in this manner.

3. We felt that size of institution might be a very significant factor, so we sampled institutions with very few graduates in teacher education curricula. We took as a cutoff the smallest institution on the Dean's Network list, and argued that any size less than that was "small." The cutoff was 57 graduates. This stipulated definition applied to the membership list of AACTE gave us the names of 254 institutions which graduated less than 57 teacher education students in 1980. We constructed a frequency distribution

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in terms of the number of graduates of these 254 institutions and sampled proportionately from the various strata of the distribution. The frequency distribution ranged in values from a low of 4 graduates to a high of 57. We decided to send questionnaires to 32 of these institutions so that our sampling design would specify equal sample sizes across the three categories of institutions.

4. Two other purposive samples were selected for diverse reasons, mostly unrelated to the research question cited above. All colleges and universities which participated in the longitudinal study of higher education, sponsored for a time by the American Council on Education, and carried out by Astin and others, were sampled.(Astin,1977). In the random selection process, thirty-two institutions were selected and if an institution were drawn which was already included in the three previously defined groups, the selection was ignored and a substitute institution was identified.

5. The final group was selected in a way similar to that of the fourth group. A roster of institutions visited by Professor James Conant in 1963 during his Carnegie Foundation study of teacher education was

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sampled.(Conant,1963). Thirty-two institutions selected at random from the Conant roster were sent questionnaires. As before, if an institution were selected that had also been named in previous samples, it was replaced in the process.

As result of these decisions, we mailed questionnaires to five groups, each with thirty-two institutions. As in any survey, there are persons in a sample who elect not to participate, or even with the best of intentions, fail to return questionnaires. Table I describes the results associated with implementing our sampling design.

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Table 1
RETURN RATES FOR EACH SUB-GROUP SAMPLED

	Dean's Network Institutions	Matching Inst'ns	Small Inst'ns	Astin Inst'ns	Conant Inst'ns
Number of Institutions	38		254	435	77
Number of Institutions in Population Belonging to AACTE	36		254	181	61
Number of Questionnaires Mailed	32	32	32	32	32
Number of original sample who declined to participate or who did not return questionnaires.	6	13	21	16	20
Number nominated as replacements and mailed questionnaires	0	1	2	2	2
Total number of questionnaires mailed	32	33	34	34	34
Professor Returns	26	22	14	19	14
Return Rate of Professors	81%	66%	41%	56%	41%

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DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Once the sample was identified, each dean[1] of the respective school, college or department of education was mailed a letter telling of our interest in describing instructional intent in methods courses. The deans were invited to pass on our questionnaires to a faculty member who "regularly teaches methods courses." The choice of the faculty member was left to the dean. The professors were each given a pre-stamped envelope in which to return the questionnaire to us at the University of Illinois. We assured the professor that no individual, no institution, and no program would be identified with specific responses in our report of this research.

Deans returned post-cards telling us either that they did not choose to participate in the study, or informing us of the name of the faculty member to whom the questionnaires had been directed. When an institution declined to participate, we selected an alternate, if one were available. After a period of time, if a professor who had

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1. Our letter was directed variously to deans, chairs, coordinators, or to whomever was designated as the principal teacher educator at the respective campus according to AACTE records and other sources.

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been designated by the dean as the person who would respond for the institution had not sent in a questionnaire, we called or wrote to urge compliance with our request. Only one such follow up was carried out for any one faculty member, it was assumed that if a response was not forthcoming after our prompt, the instructor was not interested in cooperating with the study, as was his or her right.

In our earlier study, we found that membership in the Dean's Network did not account for much variance in the teaching of methods courses. However, subsequent to the time we planned and implemented our study, Eash (1983) identified 25 institutions that represented major research producers in Education, and eleven of those institutions were represented in our sample. We analysed the data, making use of Eash's categories and found significant relationships. In reporting the findings of this research, the entire sample of ninety five professors, representing the various reference groups cited above were dichotomized into (1) R&D Institutions and (2) Non-R&D institutions. A related finding of the original study was that a significant portion of variance in the teaching of methods courses was accounted for by whether or not the professor attended one

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of Eash's research producing institutions for his or her doctoral work. The findings below break out those professors (N= 34) to give some perspective to the results.

To recapitulate, we have the self-reported descriptions of 95 teacher educators who represent a national sample of large and small institutions, R&D and not R&D institutions in the United States. How representative this group of 95 individuals is of all teacher educators is of course problematic. We assume the findings are nevertheless instructive.

FINDINGS

Research Question 1

The first assertion tested in this re-analysis of the findings of the earlier study was that teacher educators tend not to do research in teacher education itself. To address this question, the responses to the question, "What area of inquiry, research, administration, evaluation are you now working?" posed to the 95 professors responding to the questionnaire are set out in Table 2.

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Table 2
AREAS OF RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND INQUIRY IN WHICH PROFESSORS REPORTED THEY WERE CURRENTLY ENGAGED

	Categories of Areas of Inquiry					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Profs at R&D Insts(N=11)	2	0	2	5	0	2
Profs at NON-R&D Insts(N=84)	18	4	17	18	11	16
TOTALS (N=95)	20	4	19	23	11	18
Profs with PHDs from R&D Insts(N=34)	(7)	(2)	(5)	(13)	(3)	(4)

Key for Categories:

1 = Teacher Education Research.
2 = Research in Subject Matter Content.
3 = Research into Educational Processes, viz. thinking, creativity.
4 = Teacher Effectiveness Research.
5 = Topics of General Interest, viz. bilingual education, history of ed.
6 = Not mentioned, other categories, administration.

The findings suggest that only 21% of those actively involved in teacher education are doing research in that field. A large number are doing work in the area of teacher effectiveness. To be fair, a number of scholars believe that one of the principal problems of teacher education is "what to teach", and these professors might see themselves working, at least indirectly, in the field of teacher

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education. They might argue that by finding out what makes for effective teaching, they will know how better to prepare candidates in their teacher education programs. But even counting those professors in the teacher education research category would mean that less than half of the sample was working in teacher education areas.

Research Question 2

Our second surmise was that teacher educators do not identify with the field of teacher education, a factor which may diminish their interest in teacher education research and which may weaken their disposition to inquire into the processes of teacher education. One measure of "identification" in any professional field is affiliation with professional associations. The professors who constituted the sample of the earlier study were asked, "What organization do you view as your primary professional association? Their responses are arrayed in Table 3.

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Table 3
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY PROFESSORS AS
THEIR PRIMARY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

	Categories of Associations					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Profs at R&D Insts (N=11)	0	2	8	0	0	1
Profs at NON-R&D Insts(N=84)	7	6	31	6	18	16
TOTALS (N=95)	7	8	39	6	18	17
Profs with PhDs from R&D Insts.(N=34)	(3)	(6)	(15)	(3)	(3)	(4)

Key for Categories:

1 = Teacher Education Organizations, viz. ATE, AACTE.
2 = Research Organizations, viz. AERA, NARST, AESA.
3 = Subject Matter Organizations, viz. NCTE, NCTM, NCSS, NSTA.
4 = Local and State Professional Associations.
5 = ASCD, Phi Delta Kappa.
6 = None, others or unrecognized.

The data suggest that teacher educators in this sample identify strongly with the organizations associated with the subject matters they are teaching. Science methods professors affiliate with the NSTA; English methods instructors with the NCTE and reading methods instructors

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with IRA. Only approximately seven (7) percent of the sample gave teacher education associations as their primary professional allegiance.

DISCUSSION

In the main, the findings suggest that a small proportion of teacher educators are involved in teacher education research, and that one reason that may account for this fact is that as academics, they identify more closely with other disciplines within the broad field of Education.

If it is the case that teacher educators publish very little research in the area of teacher education, how serious is this condition? A group of distinguished Education deans argued that the lack of scholarship on the part of education professors affects negatively the quality of education programs, not only those offered in the public schools, but also those found in SCDE's as well.(Tucker and others, 1981). While this group was speaking in the main of all professors of education, an implication of its assertion is that teacher education programs are unlikely to improve unless they are the target of systematic inquiry. And who

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is in a better position to study teacher education than teacher educators? Thus, it seems the consequences are quite serious.

If it is the case that teacher educators do not identify strongly with the field of teacher education, there are a number of ways this situation might be ameliorated.

1. Deans could agree only to employ professors who have been trained in teacher education in their teacher education programs. Presumably, training in teacher education would include helping doctoral candidates become aware of some of the pressing problems and issues in the teacher education field, and preparing them in various methodologies appropriate for attacking them. NCATE, for instance, might have as one of its functions the task of "certifying" teacher educators. This process might bring to the practice persons who identify with the field and who bring their abilities and research wants to it.

2. It has been extremely difficult for teacher education researchers to find an organization with which to

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identify. AACTE doesn't include individual memberships and its newsletters and meetings are not usually oriented to research. ATE is a possibility, but often that organization is seen to be in the hands of the "practitioners" and not the researchers. We have a new hope now. Division K of AERA is newly formed and organized to cater to the needs of teacher education researchers. It would be important for all of us to urge our teacher education colleagues to affiliate with Division K and to share in developing its programs and publications to advance the field of teacher education research.

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